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OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHML #0679 0860428  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3662  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 000679

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [RP](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE - DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS RESOLUTION

REF: STATE 27376

1. (SBU) Post discussed reftel points with the Office of United Nations and International Organizations (UNIO) of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), underscoring U.S. concerns that the resolution could be used to limit freedom of religion and expression and curtail legitimate dissent. Post also provided DFA with a copy of the press release of the U.S. response to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning Combating Defamation of Religions.

2. (SBU) Assistant Director Leila Lorasantos said that DFA received on March 24 a similarly worded demarche from the EU and added that, while the Philippines has traditionally supported OIC resolutions, the government is considering carefully its position on the current Defamation of Religions Resolution because of the international scrutiny it has received. The Director explained that the Philippines is aware that this is a vital issue and has decided to take an "observer" position in Geneva. She added that no decision has been reached on how they would vote if pressed.

3. (SBU) COMMENT: Given the Philippines' previous support for OIC resolutions concerning racism and defamation of religion, it is not likely that the government will now instruct its delegation in Geneva to oppose the current resolution; however, it does appear that they are willing to abstain. This would be an improvement from their previous "yes" votes at the UNGA and HRC. Post will continue to follow up on this issue in the coming days. END COMMENT.

KENNEY